

Newark vs. At Sea Incineration

Importing 7.5 million gallons of PCB's, Dioxin, and other highly toxic chemicals into such a densely populated area will not solve New Jersey's Toxic Waste Problem.

Who is At Sea Incineration? At Sea Incineration was an independent Delaware corporation purchased by Tacoma Boatbuilding, Inc. with headquarters in Washington State. The incineration ships will be owned by Apollo Marine Co. of Lake Success, New York, but built by Tacoma Boatbuilding. None of the companies involved has any experience with toxic waste disposal.

What do they plan to do? At Sea Incineration is proposing to build a huge toxic waste storage and processing plant, loading and unloading facility, and ship docks required at least 27 acres of land. It will be designed for storage of 7,500,000 gallons of toxic wastes - about 3 times more than was stored at Chemical Control at the time it exploded in April 1980. There will be 2 incinerator ships designed to carry toxic wastes out to sea.

Where will it be located? The site will be at Port Newark on a flood plain. More than 20 million people live within 25 miles of the proposed site. Port Newark is one of the busiest ports on the East Coast. It is a mile from Newark Airport. Food handling occurs at nearby sites.

Will the proposal solve New Jersey's hazardous waste problem? No! This proposal would result in the importing of millions of gallons of the most toxic chemicals ever created. Research studies show that up to 90% of New Jersey's hazardous waste **cannot** be legally or economically incinerated at sea. Only a small fraction of the wastes brought to the site would be from New Jersey.

What are some of the dangers? There are 16,000 accidents involving the transportation of hazardous materials each year. Importing millions of gallons of hazardous wastes over long distances greatly increases the likelihood of an accident. The highly dangerous chemicals will travel along the highways that lead to Newark - the New Jersey Turnpike, Routes 1 & 9, 22, 21, I-78, I-280, and I-95. Hundreds of trucks per week will pass through all the cities and towns located along these routes. Accidents during the transport are certain. The only questions are how often and how serious they will be.

The toxic wastes will be mixed on land before incineration at sea. Not all of the compounds in the wastes will be known. Current knowledge of what chemicals are created when unknowns react is limited. Few firemen have the training or equipment to fight some of these unknown hazards.

The ships carrying the toxic wastes would have to complete a long, complicated journey to reach open seas. The route would include: crossing Newark Bay, a blind turn at the tip of Bayonne into the narrow Kill Van Kull, travel through Upper Newark Bay, the Verrazano Narrows and Lower Newark Bay before reaching the Atlantic Ocean. A spill or accident **anywhere** along this route could be catastrophic. The shipping route passes Newark, Elizabeth, Jersey City, Bayonne, Staten Island, and Brooklyn. The route is within the harbor having the highest number of accidents of any along the East Coast of the United States - more than 50 shipping accidents a year. Coast Guard statistics show that 73% of all collisions involving large ships at major East Coast ports occurred in or near New York Harbor.

What are the chemicals At Sea will handle and what are their effects? At Sea Incineration is only suitable and allowable for some toxic wastes. The likely candidates are the most highly toxic: chlorinated organic wastes (including pesticides), PCB's, nerve gases from the military, and dioxin (TCDD) contaminated waste products. PCB's, themselves highly toxic, may be contaminated with even more toxic polychlorinated dibenzofurans. PCB's can cause tumors, skin lesions, reproductive failures, swelling of joints and skin rash.

Will there be environmental damage? Yes. If as planned, At Sea were to burn 250,000 metric tons a year of toxic chemicals at a 99.99% level of destruction, between 100-200,000 tons per year of hydrogen chloride would enter the atmosphere. More than 50,000 pounds of unburned toxic chemicals would enter the atmosphere. The problem of toxic air pollution blowing back towards shore can occur when the wind is blowing from the northeast, east, southeast, south or southwest. In addition, the tank farm and processing plant will emit dangerous chemicals into our air supply.

Is the plan economically viable? No one knows. There is a wide disparity in disposal cost projected by At Sea Incineration Inc. for its project compared with government studies. The prices range between \$40 and \$57 per ton in a U.S. government study up to an estimate of \$110 to \$550 per ton made by an executive of At Sea, and higher projections made by Tacoma Boat-building executives.

What has happened in the past? In the U.S., two series of test burns were conducted by Shell Oil Company in the Gulf of Mexico in October 1974, January 1975, and March and April 1977. Shell subsequently decided to dispose of their wastes by other methods. A site in the Gulf of Mexico was designated for the at sea incineration of toxic chemical wastes in 1976. It has been used only rarely since 1977.

Who will protect us? We don't have an answer but we have more questions. Are there workable evacuation plans for every municipality that the toxic wastes will be transported through? Do firemen have sufficient training to handle all the types of accidents where toxic wastes are involved? Can anyone handle an accident where the chemicals are unknown? Will the DEP protect us? They haven't protected us in the past. Less than 3% of all fines they levy against offender companies are actually collected. Budget cutbacks have reduced the amount of DEP staff available for inspections.

What are the alternatives? No matter which alternative is used, facilities cannot be located in the most densely populated areas of our country. Decentralization to smaller facilities can reduce the impact on any one community and eliminate the "out of sight, out of mind" approach. Moreover, the further each ton of toxic wastes travels, the higher the frequency of transport accidents. The larger the concentration of these chemicals in one site, the larger the damage to people, property and the environment when an on-site accident occurs.

Who is opposed to At Sea Incineration? The Greater Newark Bay Coalition Against Toxic Wastes, the Ironbound Committee Against Toxic Wastes, the Coalition for a United Elizabeth (CUE), the Ironbound Health Project, New Jersey Public Interest Research Group (PIRG), Essex County Safe Energy (SEA) Alliance, New Jersey Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (NJCSOH), Bayonne Citizens Against Toxic Sites, Bayonne Against Tanks, Mayors from 10 Hudson County municipalities, Essex County officials, Newark officials, the New Jersey Medical Society, the New Jersey Council of Churches, doctors, firemen, and thousands of individuals.

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